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POEMS "SIGNED" BY SIR THOMAS WYATT

The edition of Surrey's poems by Prof. Padelford includes, as no. 20 of its texts, five stanzas beginning "I that Vlysses yeres haue spent." Though assigned to Surrey by the only manuscript, Harley 78, this poem is by Tottel (ed. Arber p. 241) included among the poems by Uncertain Authors, and Prof. Padelford considers its authenticity "very doubtful."

Upon the question of authenticity or authorship some light may be cast by observing that the initial letters of the five stanzas are I-A-W-T-T, which, by a transposition not difficult to the Tudor mind, give Wyatt's name.

Another poem, not in any manuscript known to us, an printed by Tottel (Arber p. 14) among the poems of Surrey, is reprinted thence by Prof. Padelford as his no. 13. It opens "When ragyng loue with extreme payne," and the initial letters of its five stanzas read, in sequence, W-I-A-T-T.

Both these poems are in six-line stanzas, and of five stanzas only; another poem of the same structure and length, printed by Tottel (Arber p. 184) among verse by Uncertain Authors, is initialled T-A-W-I-T.

To these it may be added that one of the accredited Wyatt-poems, printed from Ms. Add. 17492 by Miss Foxwell on p. 315 of her first volume, has to its three seven-line stanzas this sequence of line-initials:—T-T-T-T-T-W-A; T-T-T-T-T-Y; W-W-W-W-T-T. Not only the mass of W's and T's here, but the T. WYATT given by the initials of 6 and 7, 13 and 14, 20 and 21, proclaim the authorship of the poem, which is not in the autograph Egerton Ms. nor in Tottel. Wyatt's procedure here makes it evident that he was no stranger to the literary trick he uses. He uses it, indeed, for other than his own name; the poem printed by Miss Foxwell 1: 257, and beginning "Suffryng in sorow in hope to attayn," shows in its stanza-initials the word SHELTON. As the unique copy is found in Ms. Add. 17492, once the property of Surrey's sister and of her friend Mary Shelton, and as the name of Mary Shelton is written at the foot of the page bearing the poem, such evidence of Wyatt's literary "gallantry" has its interest.

The editor of Wyatt-texts, noting the first three poems above mentioned, and looking through the Wyatt-corpus for any further traces of such signatures, is puzzled by the verse printed pp. 286, 323, and 357 of Miss Foxwell's edition. In the poem at p. 286 the five stanzas give the initials I-A-W-T-Y; in the second poem we find A-W-W-T-I. These are both from the manuscript Add. 17492. The third text, from the *Courte of Venus*, shows T-W-W-I-T-A. Regarding the first of the three we may observe that the Y represents in Miss Foxwell's print the word *Ytt*. Should we read "That," instead, we might by no very great strain

take the anagram to be WIATT or T. WIAT. In the case of the other two poems we may query whether second W be intentional on the writer's part, or whether the frequency of line-openings with *When*, with *And*, with *The*, *Thou*, or *That*, and (in lyric) with the pronoun *I*, is responsible for some of these apparent signatures.

Such a query is emphasized by reading Wyatt's epigram *To Anna* (Foxwell p. 48), in which the first four of the seven lines are initialled W-T-I-A; and by noting the first four tercets of the satire to Brian (ibid. p. 147) with their sequence A-T-W-I; also by the first four lines of the treizaine on p. 171, beginning Y-T-W-A. The second of these cases is worth very little, the poem being in terza rima; nor is there any import in the inset-initialling W-W-I-T-A etc. on p. 256 of Tottel, since that poem is in couplets. And in such a poem as the quatrains printed Tottel p. 191, the fact that the first five lines begin A-T-W-A-I is another argument for the possibility of coincidence. One hardly knows, indeed, where to draw the line between such anagrams as the long-obvious *Damascene Awdley* and *Edward Somerset* (Tottel 105, 164) and the *An Adams* of Wyatt's (doubtful) poem printed on p. 268 of Miss Foxwell's edition. Where is the frontier between coincidence and deliberate purpose?

But as for the Shelton poem and that beginning "The ioye so short alas the paine so nere," there can be no doubt of the poet's intention. In the latter the student of poetry as well as the mechanician shows his hand; the line moves with the same flow that is heard at the beginning of an anonymous poem of the Ms. Fairfax 16,—*"The tyme so long the payn ay mor and more,"*—and, earlier than these, in the opening line of Chaucer's *Parlement of Foules*. Compare, too, Sackville's *Induction*, line 288.

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BRIEF MENTION.

The Problem of Style, by J. Middleton Murry (Oxford University Press, 1922. vii, 148 pp.). Here are six excellent lectures, which "were delivered in the school of English Literature at Oxford . . . in the Summer Term of 1921." The titles are: (1) the Meaning of Style; (2) the Psychology of Style; (3) Poetry and Prose; (4) the Central Problem of Style; (5) the Process of Creative Style; (6) the English Bible; and the Grand Style. An analytic table of contents serves the useful purpose of